



Planning & Economic Development Department
100 Hughes Road
Madison, Alabama 35758

Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: March 24, 2022

Project: The Learning Zone (Site Plan 2021-38)

**Applicant/
Property
Owner:** CML Properties

Location: South of Gillespie Road, West of Balch Road

Request Summary

This is a request for a site plan for a 17,825 square foot childcare building on 2.40 acres. This item was continued from the February 17, 2022 meeting to allow staff time to complete a traffic analysis to evaluate a full access driveway on Gillespie. That analysis is provided as Attachment No. 3 to this report. Previous action by the Commission regarding access has been added to the Background section of this report.



Recommendation

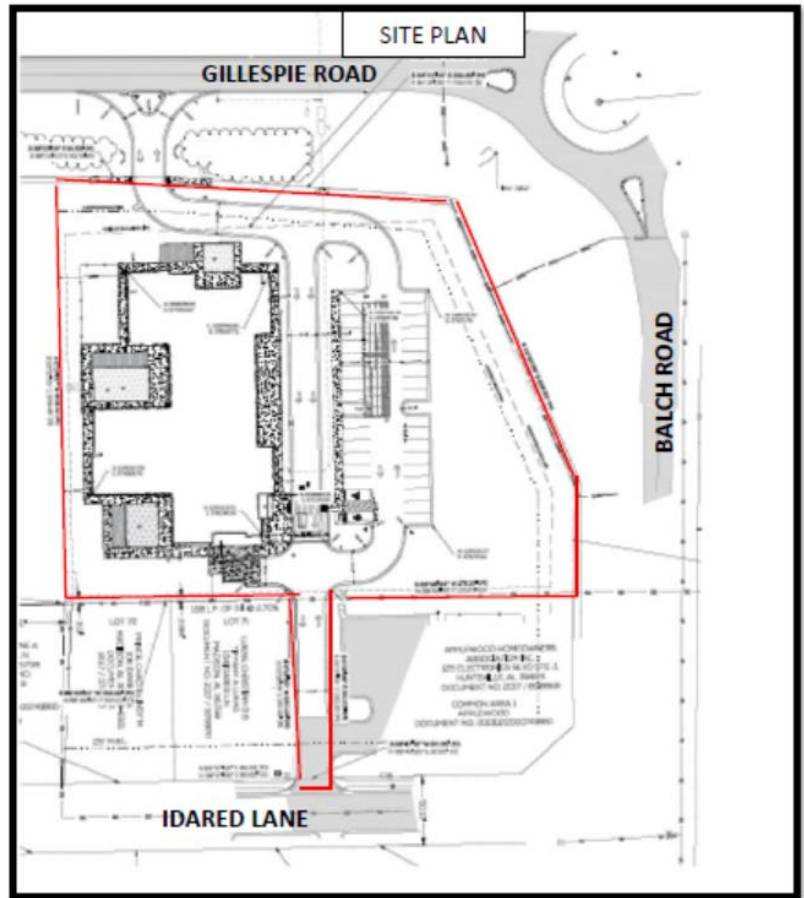
Motion to:

“Approve the Site Plan for the Learning Zone (SP2021-038), with contingencies.”

Project Request

This is a site plan for a childcare center consisting of approximately 17,825 square feet. The center is designed for a maximum of 252 children, ranging in age from infants to five years old, and will employ approximately 15 employees. The facility will be a one-story building. The hours of operation will be from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The site plan includes 35 parking spaces. Access to the property will be via a right in/out on Gillespie and via an existing ingress/egress connection with Idared Lane, which connects to Balch.



General Information

Background:

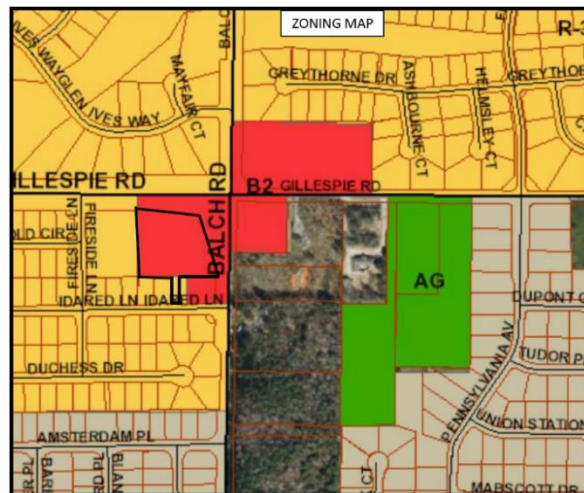
The Planning Commission approved a Layout Amendment and the Final Plat for the Applewood Subdivision in July 2013. The staff report and minutes reflect that in response to Planning Commission questions and concerns about access associated with the commercial parcel (then Parcel 1) that the applicant and Engineering and Planning staff had agreed to the following:

1. The ingress/egress easement that connects the parcel with Idared Lane would become part of the commercial parcel and be maintained by the owner of the commercial parcel and not the HOA.
2. The ingress/egress easement would remain in place to allow the Applewood Subdivision property owners to use it.
3. The commercial parcel would be allowed full access to Gillespie Road and right in/right out access to Balch Road.

The first two items are captured in the Final Plat, though staff is not aware of who has been maintaining the easement given that the commercial property has not yet developed. The third item is not noted on the Final Plat; however, the plat does restrict access to both Gillespie and Balch for all but the commercial parcel. Staff would note that a roundabout was not considered for the intersection in 2013, which would have influenced Engineering's decision.

Future Land Use, Zoning, and Existing Land Uses:

TABLE 1 LAND USE AND ZONING INFORMATION			
Location	Future Land Use Map	Zoning	Existing Land Use
Subject Site	RL (Residential Low Density)	Main Property - B2 (Community Business), Access Area - R-2 (Medium Density Residential)	Undeveloped property
North of Subject Property (across Gillespie Road)	RHS (Residential High Density Single Family)	R-3A (Single-Family Detached Dwelling)	Single-family Subdivision
East of Subject Property (across Balch Road)	RL	B2	Convenience Store
South of Subject Property	RL	B2 R-3A	HOA Swimming Pool, Single-family
West of Subject Property	RL	R-3A	Single-family subdivision



Conformance with Long Range Plans:

1. Future Land Use Map
The Future Land Use Map designates the property RL (Residential Low Density). The underlying zoning of B2 is consistent with C (Commercial).
2. West Side Master Plan. Not Applicable
3. Growth Plan. Note Applicable
4. Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Not Applicable

Zoning & Subdivision Compliance:

The proposed project complies with all applicable requirements in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Technical Review Committee:

The subject request was reviewed by the Technical Review Committee. The Committee recommends approval of the application with the contingencies provided in Attachment No. 1. The Engineering Department has completed a traffic analysis for the proposed project, which is summarized in Attachment No. 3.

Analysis

The project will provide additional childcare facilities for Madison residents, which is a needed service. Access to the property is recommended to be restricted to the existing access to the south that was approved with the Final Plat for Applewood Subdivision in 2013 and a new access point on Gillespie. Due to the new roundabout and overall existing traffic and intersection conditions, Engineering does not recommend a full access driveway on Gillespie nor access directly to Balch. The project complies with all applicable regulations and staff recommends approval.

Attachments

1. Recommended Technical Review Committee Contingencies for Learning Zone/Site Plan
2. Site Plan dated and received February 9, 2022
(If viewed electronically from a link on the published agenda, this attachment can be found by clicking on the title of the project name listed on the agenda)
3. Staff Memorandum re: Gillespie Road Driveway

Attachment No. 1

Recommended Technical Review Committee Contingencies	
Learning Zone	Site Plan

Engineering Department

1. Provide ADEM permit.

Fire Department

1. Add Fire Department notes on the fire access page on Sheet C3.0

Attachment No. 3
Staff Memorandum re: Gillespie Road Driveway



Planning & Economic Development Department
100 Hughes Road
Madison, Alabama 35758

March 24, 2022

To: Madison Planning Commission

Subject: Learning Zone (Site Plan 2021-38) – Technical Memorandum for Consideration of Gillespie Road Driveway

Summary

This memo summarizes a traffic study conducted by the Madison Engineering Department in relation to a proposed site plan for the Learning Zone, a childcare facility. The general purpose of the traffic study was to determine if a full access drive to Gillespie Road was reasonable. Based on their analysis, the Engineering Department recommends the following options:

Preferred: Remove access drive from Gillespie Road.

Alternative: Allow Right in/Right out access to Gillespie Road with a splitter island and a vertical tubular traffic delineator on the raised area to prevent left turn movements.

Analysis

Intersection

The Engineering Department used the following methodology to analyze the intersection:

- Traffic count data were collected on March 1st, from 3:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. and March 3rd from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. to capture both a.m. and p.m. peak hour trips.
- Daily trips for the proposed daycare were estimated using the Trip Generation Manual published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, which indicates approximately 200 end trips for the proposed 17,825 square feet facility.
- Assumed 25 percent of anticipated trips would originate from each direction.

The data result in the following Level of Service (LOS) for the intersection, showing acceptable operating conditions.

February 17, 2022

Traffic movement	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	Existing LOS	Proposed LOS (Distributed over an hour)	Existing LOS	Proposed LOS (Distributed over an hour)
North Bound	LOS B	LOS B	LOS B	LOS B
South Bound	LOS B	LOS C	LOS C	LOS D
West Bound	LOS A	LOS B	LOS A	LOS A
East Bound	LOS C	LOS B	LOS C	LOS C

Overall, the addition of the daycare at the corner has minimal impact to the intersection, with the only estimated discernible change occurring for south bound traffic during the PM peak hour but still functioning at an acceptable level of service of D or better

The Department also calculated the LOS if all proposed trips from the daycare occurred in a 15-minute window during peak periods. With this assumption, the LOS for the AM peak 15-minute window remains at acceptable C and D levels; however, the LOS drops to F in the PM peak 15-minute window, which is the lowest LOS.

Gillespie Driveway

In considering a full access driveway from Gillespie, the Engineering Department reviewed the Federal Highway Administration's publication *Roundabouts: An Information Guide*, June 2000. Chapter 6: Geometric Design, Section 6.11.2 addresses access near roundabouts. The Guide notes that roundabouts have a more random distribution of traffic versus a signalized intersection, which can create a grouping of traffic. The random distribution of vehicles results in full access driveways downstream of a roundabout having less capacity and higher delay.

If a full access driveway were installed, a left turn storage area would typically be recommended on a major street, and adequate distance from the roundabout splitter island needs to be accommodated, as well as adequate site distance. For the subject site, a left turn storage area that could hold four cars is feasible.

After considering all of the factors, the Engineering Department concludes that if a full access driveway were installed, free flow movement of the roundabout will cause circulation problems for west bound vehicles trying to turn into the site and potentially back up the roundabout. As noted, there would only be room for stacking of four vehicles in a left turn storage area.

Engineering Recommendation

Preferred – The site has reasonable access from Gillespie via Fire Side Lane then Idared Lane, and Balch via Idared Lane. Removal of any driveway off of Gillespie for the site would alleviate the need for additional storage or modification to the splitter island to prevent vehicles from turning left into the site.

Alternative – A right in/right out driveway can be included to provide access to Gillespie and to avoid potential back up through the roundabout. This would require a splitter island extension past the proposed driveway location, with vertical tubular traffic delineator on the raised area to prevent left turning movements.